

Customer No. 24498
Attorney Docket No. PF030127
Final Office Action Date: October 21, 2008

Remarks/arguments

Claims 1-22 are pending.

New claims 27 and 28 have been added and claim 1, 6, 13 and 17 have been amended to more clearly and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicant regard as their invention.

The claims have been amended to make clear that the individual identifiers are reproduced automatically when a group is selected, so that loopwise reproduction can be performed by user.

Support for amendment can be found, for example, in originally filed claim 6 and the specification on page 10 line 10 to page 10 line 27:

According to this variant, these documents are reproduced loopwise when the group is selected. The representative documents are for example those situated at a distance less than a determined value from the equibarycentre. An improvement of this variant consists in the fact that the user himself determines the number of each group's representative documents. In this way, the user may instigate the reproduction of a significant number of documents having auditory continuity and this have to select them manually. The first document selected by the program as representative is that of the group whose distance is smallest from the equibarycentre, then the second, then the third and so on and so forth. When the number programmed by the user is reached, the program selects the first document.

Another improvement consists in reproducing only an extract of each document. The duration of each extract may be defined by the program, or advantageously, the user programs this duration. In this way, the user can rapidly get an idea of the genre of sound documents located in the group. (emphasis added)

Since the number of documents depends on the number of representative documents that are situated at a distance less than a determined value from the equibarycentre, this number is different according to each group of document.

Customer No. 24498
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No new matter is believed to be added by the present amendment.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 1-2, 13-13, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada et al (JP '575) in view of Hinde (US patent 7,190,794), applicants respectfully submit that for the reasons discussed below the pending claims are patentably distinguishable over the suggested combination of Okada and Hinde.

The teachings of Okada have been discussed in applicants' previous response. The office action acknowledges that Okada fails to disclose that "the identifiers are reproduced loopwise when this group is selected." The Office Action cites Hinde to cure the defect of Okada as applied to the claims. Applicants submit that neither reference discloses or suggests the feature of determination of a number of the group's representative documents, the determined number of audio documents being reproduced loopwise when this group is selected as recited in the claims.

Hinde discloses an audio user interfaces in which services are represented by audio labels in an audio field. With the audio interface, the user can select services such as communication services (for example, e-mail, voice mail, fax, telephone, etc.), entertainment services (such as internet radio), information resources (including databases, search engines and individual documents), transactional services (for example, retail and banking web sites), augmented-reality services, etc. When the apparatus is in a "desktop" mode, each service is represented in the audio field through a corresponding synthesized sound source presenting an audio label for the service. The sound sources representing the services are synthesized to sound, to a user, as though they exist at respective locations in the audio field.

The Office Action cites column 6 as disclosing that considering that an audio field can be arranged on a 3D spherical surface with an azimuth angle X°, supporting azimuth rotation of the audio field. By this way, the user can explore the audio field by commanding a particular rotation of the audio field. Column 24, lines 20 to 35, discloses the command available for the user:

Customer No. 24498
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"Three specific selection techniques will now be described with reference to FIG. 18 which shows further detail of the second apparatus (though it is to be understood that the techniques are equally applicable to the first apparatus); the general character of each of the selection techniques to be described is as follows:

- 1) -rotation/displacement of the audio field to bring the sound source to be selected to a particular selection direction with respect to the user;*
- 2.)-moving an audio cursor to coincide with the sound source to be selected;*
- 3.)-speech input with restricted recogniser search space."*

Therefore, the user can rotate on himself to listen to sound emitted from a specific direction. But this command is manual, Hinde does not disclose or suggest that, without user's introduction command, the direction can be changed and that it is possible to hear a sound from another direction than the direction specified by the user.

By contrast, according to the present invention, the positioning of an audio document is dependent on at least one characteristic of the document, and the identifiers of the documents representing a group are reproduced loopwise when a specific group is selected. In the present invention, the reproduced identifiers of the documents representing a group are not all in the **direction specified by the user's command**. Therefore the feature of "*reproduction of the identifiers of the several documents representing a group, the reproduced identifiers having a position situated at a distance less than a determined distance with respect to the position of the user in the space, the identifiers being reproduced loopwise when this group is selected*" is not taught nor suggested by Hinde.

Moreover, Hinde discloses the selection of a sound source specified by the particular selection direction with respect to the user. Hinde does not disclose nor suggest another possibility of the selection of sound source other than the selection direction introduced by the user. Therefore, when the user specifies a direction, all the sound sources in this direction are selected.

Customer No. 24498
Attorney Docket No. PF030127
Final Office Action Date: October 21, 2008

In contrast, according to the present invention, first, at least one number of the group's representative documents is determined, and then, a determined number of audio documents representing each group are only reproduced. In this manner, a limited number of audio documents representing each group are reproduced. This characteristic of limitation of the number of audio documents representing each group is not taught nor suggested by Hinde.

In view of the above, applicants submit that even if the teachings of Okada and Hinde are combined, as suggested by the Office Action, the suggested combination would still fail to disclose or suggest each and every limitation of claims 1 and 13. Additionally, the remaining claims that depend from claims 1 and 13 are believed to be patentably distinguishable over the suggested combination for at least the same reasons as those discussed above with respect to claims 1 and 13.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 3-9, 15-18, and 23-26 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada, in view of Hinde and further in view of Foote et al., applicants respectfully submit that for the reasons discussed below the subject claims are patentably distinguishable over the cited combination.

Claims 3-9, 15-18, and 23-26 depend respectively from claims 1 and 13. Foote is cited as disclosing various additional features not taught or suggested by the combination of Okada and Hinde. Applicants submit that even assuming arguendo that Foote discloses the various features as alleged, Foote still fails to overcome the defect of Okada and Hinde as applied to claims 1 and 13. Therefore, in view of the dependence of the subject claims to respective claims 1 and 13, applicants respectfully submit that the subject claims are patentably distinguishable over the suggested combination of Okada, Hinde and Foote.

Customer No. 24498
Attorney Docket No. PF030127
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In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the new set of claims is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is requested. No additional fees are believed due in connection with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge the fee to deposit account 07-0832.

Respectfully submitted,
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